

**DETERMINANTS OF BRAND EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS OF CONSUMERS IN
UZBEK MARKET**

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the research is to form the basis for a dissertation exploring the determinants of brand emotional attachments among consumers in the Uzbek market. It aims to investigate the relationship between emotional brand attachment, customer attitudes, and brand loyalty. The dissertation seeks to fill research gaps, provide insights for building stronger emotional connections with customers, and contribute to understanding consumer behavior in Uzbek market.

Methodology approach – The methodology for this dissertation will utilize a quantitative research approach, drawing on the works of various authors. It will involve surveying 150 consumers in the Uzbek market using a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions. The survey will be administered to the respondents through both Telegram and email platforms to ensure accessibility and convenience.

The questionnaire will be designed based on the research questions and hypotheses derived from the literature review, taking into consideration the contributions of authors such as Levy and the Hino (2016), Quach (1919), Korhonen (2018), Thompson et al. (2006), Kim et al. (2017), and Park et al. These authors have provided valuable insights into the concepts of long-term consumer engagement, emotive brand attachment, market differentiation, and the impact of emotional brand connection on consumer attitudes and brand profitability.

After the survey data is collected from the 150 respondents, statistical analysis techniques, such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics, will be employed to analyze the data. These analyses will provide insights into the relationships between variables and enable the exploration of the determinants of brand emotional attachment among consumers in the Uzbek market.

Research Question:

What are the factors that determine consumers' emotional attachment to brands in the Uzbek market?

Objectives:

- Understand how customers' attitudes towards a brand are influenced by emotional brand attachment.
- Examine the impact of brand loyalty on emotional brand attachment.
- Investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction and emotional brand attachment.

Findings - The research findings suggest that emotional brand attachment plays a significant role in determining consumers' attitudes and loyalty towards brands in the Uzbek market. The study reveals a positive relationship between emotional brand attachment and customer attitudes, indicating that when consumers develop emotional connections with a brand, it positively influences their perception and evaluation of the brand. Furthermore, the research highlights the impact of brand loyalty on emotional brand attachment. The findings indicate that emotional brand attachment is influenced by brand loyalty, suggesting that consumers who exhibit higher levels of loyalty towards a brand are more likely to develop stronger emotional attachments to that brand. Additionally, the study shows a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and emotional brand attachment. Consumers who are satisfied with a brand are more likely to develop emotional connections, indicating that customer satisfaction acts as a precursor to emotional brand attachment. These findings highlight the importance of emotional brand attachment in shaping consumer behavior and brand perceptions in the Uzbek market. Businesses can benefit from understanding and fostering emotional connections with consumers, as it can lead to enhanced customer attitudes, loyalty, and satisfaction. By focusing on building emotional brand attachments, companies can establish stronger relationships with their target audience and differentiate themselves in the competitive marketplace.

Keywords: Brand love, Brand loyalty, Emotional brand attachment, Brand satisfaction.

I. Introduction:

According to Levy and the Hino (2016) as well as Quach (1919), long-term consumer engagement is highly valued in marketing as it fosters loyalty, commitment, and trust in a brand. Korhonen (2018) supports the concept of emotive brand attachment, which is influenced by behavior relationships, cognitive biases, and socio-emotional attachments. Thompson et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of emotional brand attachment as a driver of market differentiation and long-term competitive advantage. Kim et al. (2017) describe how emotional brand attachment motivates brands to enhance their interactions with clients, leading to brand profitability and long-term customer value. Previous research, such as that conducted by Fedorikhin (2008), Yeung and Wyer (2005), Boush (1991), and He (Li, 2010), has shown that a stronger emotional attachment to a brand extension increases consumers' association with the original brand.

However, there is limited research on how emotional brand attachment influences attitudes toward brand extensions, despite numerous studies on emotional brand connection and mindset toward brand expansion. Alnawas et al. (2016) and Altarifi et al. (2018) highlight the need to identify the mediating role of customer attitudes in the relationship between emotional brand attachment and mindset toward brand extensions. This study aims to explore how customers' perception of a brand extension is influenced by emotive brand attachment, filling the gap in our understanding of these emotional constructs. The traditional view that loyalty is solely based on satisfaction, as argued by Cardozo (1965) and Oliver (1999), may no longer hold true in a competitive market where brands and products can drive consumers to switch even if they are satisfied. To establish customer loyalty, it is crucial to create an emotional bond that goes beyond satisfaction, leading to "zero separation" and "unwavering brand devotion" (Unal, Aydin, 2013). Therefore, new connections between loyalty and customer satisfaction need to be developed.

II. Literature review and Hypothesis development

2.1. Brand attitude and brand attachment

According to Shahin Sharifi (2014), loyalty is the acquisition of long-term customer commitments, while Khan and Rahim (2016) define it as a deep-seated commitment to repurchase a preferred product/service regularly in the future. Traditionally, brand loyalty has been associated with behavioral loyalty, focusing on repeated purchases and consistent brand use (Thaichon and Quach, 2016). In contrast, attitudinal loyalty has received attention in other studies (Thaichon and Quach, 2015).

In this study, brand loyalty is measured based on the strength of the emotional connection a consumer develops with a brand. A strong emotional connection reduces perceived risks and search costs, thereby strengthening the attachment to a brand. The level of attitudinal loyalty is influenced by the intensity of the emotional connection to a brand (Kosiba et al., 2018). Establishing a strong emotional bond with consumers has a significant impact on brand loyalty (Schmalz and Orth, 2012; Wu et al., 2017). It also acts as a protective factor when consumers encounter misleading information.

Based on these insights, our initial hypothesis is as follows:

H1. Attitude is positively influenced by emotional brand attachment.

2.2. Brand loyalty and brand attachment

According to Albert et al. (2013), commitment is a personal attribute that is built upon factors such as connection, shared values, identity, trust, and loyalty. When individuals form strong emotional attachments to others, they are more likely to exhibit loyalty towards them. Similarly, consumers' emotional attachment to a brand serves as a predictor of their loyalty (Park et al., 2010). Brand attachment is considered a more reliable measure of consumer sentiment, as it reflects a higher level of investment in terms of resources and commitment. Hence, it is logical to expect that highly loyal consumers would maintain their loyalty towards a brand even in the face of market failures such as product recalls, crises, or negative publicity surrounding the company or its employees (Ahmedlouwalia et al., 2000).

Consequently, the second hypothesis of this study can be formulated as follows:

H2. Emotional attachment positively influences brand loyalty.

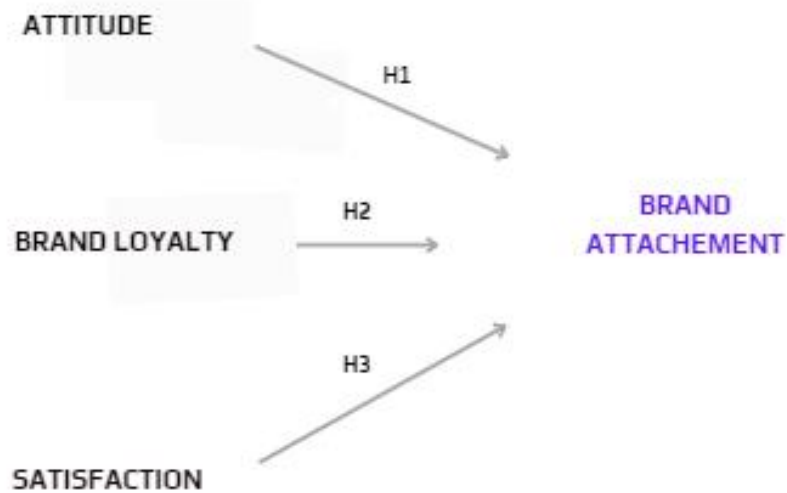
2.3. Customer satisfaction and emotional brand attachment

Satisfaction refers to the evaluation of the fulfillment of expectations and the performance of a product. Previous studies have indicated that consumer satisfaction encompasses an emotional component and represents an emotional response to the consumption process. As emotional connection can contribute to satisfaction, customers who form emotional attachments to a brand are likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with it (Moussa et al., 2014; Touzani et al., 2017). Customers who exhibit lower levels of anxiety and avoidance or possess strong emotional brand attachments are more likely to express happiness with the company (Levy et al., 2016). Additionally, research focusing on firm-focused attachment suggests that customers who are more satisfied with the company are more inclined to develop a firm-focused perspective (Levy et al., 2016).

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Based on these findings, the third hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows: H3. Emotional brand attachment has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.



Statistics

		Gender	Age	education	Employment
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1,4300	2,2700	2,9000	1,6800

Age

Gender			Age	
	N	%	N	%
Male	57	57,0%	Under 18	18, 18,0%
Female	43	43,0%	18-25	57, 57,0%
			25-34	11, 11,0%
			35-44	8, 8,0%
			45-54	6, 6,0%

education			Employment		
	N	%		N	%
High school or equivalent	13	13,0%	Student	58	58,0%
Collage	21	21,0%	Employed	26	26,0%
Bachelor's degree	37	37,0%	Unemployed	6	6,0%
Master's degree	21	21,0%	Self-employed	10	10,0%
Doctoral degree	8	8,0%			

Gender:

Among the participants, 57% identified as male, while 43% identified as female.

Age:

The largest age group consisted of participants aged 18–25, representing 57% of the sample. Other age groups showed varying levels of representation.

Education:

The majority of participants (37%) held a bachelor’s degree, followed by those with a master’s degree (21%). Other education levels were represented to varying extents.

Employment Status:

Students made up the largest employment category at 58%. Employed individuals accounted for 26%, while the remaining participants were either unemployed (6%) or self-employed (10%).

IV. Hypothesis testing and regression

The data was collected using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method. The analysis was conducted using SPSS, a popular statistical analysis software.

4.1. Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	satisfaction, attitude, loyalty ^b		. Enter

Dependent Variable: Brand Attachment

Variables Entered: Satisfaction, Attitude, Loyalty

Variables Removed: None

4.2. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,787 ^a	,619	,607	44

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.607 takes into account the number of predictors and adjusts the R Square value accordingly. This adjustment considers the complexity of the model by penalizing the inclusion of additional predictors. A higher Adjusted R Square value suggests that the model's fit is not solely influenced by the number of predictors and provides a more accurate estimate of the model's goodness of fit.

Accuracy of the model's predictions:

The Std. Error of the Estimate value of 0.55084 represents the average distance between the observed values and the predicted values by the model. A lower value indicates that the model's predictions are, on average, closer to the actual values. Therefore, the smaller the Std. Error of the Estimate, the higher the accuracy of the model's predictions.

4.3. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47,328	3	15,776	51,993	<,001 ^b
	Residual	29,129	96	,303		
	Total	76,457	99			

a. Dependent Variable: brand_attachment

b. Predictors: (Constant), satisfaction, attitude, loyalty

Regression Analysis:

- **Sum of Squares (Regression):** 47.328
- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** 3
- **Mean Square:** 15.776
- **F-value:** 51.993
- **Significance (Sig.):** <0.001

The sum of squares for the regression is 47.328, indicating the total variation in the dependent variable accounted for by the predictors. The degrees of freedom for the regression model are 3, representing the number of predictors (satisfaction, attitude, and loyalty) in the model.

The mean square value is calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the degrees of freedom, resulting in **15.776**.

The **F-value** of **51.993** indicates the ratio of the explained variance to the unexplained variance in the dependent variable. A higher F-value suggests a stronger relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. In this case, the F-value is quite large, indicating a significant relationship between the predictors and *brand_attachment*.

The **significance (Sig.)** value, reported as **<0.001**, indicates the probability of obtaining the observed F-value under the null hypothesis (no relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable). In this case, the significance level is less than 0.001, indicating a highly significant relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. This suggests that the regression model as a whole is a strong predictor of *brand_attachment*.

The mean square value is calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the degrees of freedom, resulting in 15.776.

The F-value of 51.993 indicates the ratio of the explained variance to the unexplained variance in the dependent variable. A higher F-value suggests a stronger relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. In this case, the F-value is quite large, indicating a significant relationship between the predictors and *brand_attachment*.

The significance (Sig.) value, reported as <0.001, indicates the probability of obtaining the observed F-value under the null hypothesis (no relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable). In this case, the significance level is less than 0.001, indicating a highly significant relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. This suggests that the regression model as a whole is a strong predictor of *brand_attachment*.

Residual Analysis:

Sum of Squares (Residual): 29,129
Degrees of Freedom (df): 96
Mean Square: 0.303

The sum of squares for the residuals is 29,129, indicating the total unexplained variation in *brand_attachment*. The degrees of freedom for the residuals are 96, representing the difference between the total degrees of freedom and the degrees of freedom for the regression model. The

mean square value is calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the degrees of freedom, resulting in 0.303.

Total Analysis:

Sum of Squares (Total): 76,457
Degrees of Freedom (df): 99

The total analysis represents the total variation in the dependent variable. The sum of squares for the total variation is 76,457, representing the sum of the sum of squares for the regression and the sum of squares for the residuals. The degrees of freedom for the total variation are 99, which is the sum of the degrees of freedom for the regression and the degrees of freedom for the residuals.

In summary, the regression analysis indicates that the predictors (*satisfaction, attitude, and loyalty*) collectively have a significant relationship with the dependent variable (*brand_attachment*). The F-value and the associated significance level suggest a strong statistical significance, implying that the regression model is a valuable predictor of *brand_attachment*. The residual analysis shows the unexplained variation in the dependent variable, while the total analysis represents the total variation.

4.4. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,627	,154		4,069	<,001
	attitude	,047	,067	,058	,700	,485
	loyalty	-,145	,474	-,179	-,305	,761
	satisfaction	,753	,470	,927	1,603	,112

a. Dependent Variable: brand_attachment

Constant:

The constant term has a coefficient of 0.627, indicating the estimated value of the dependent variable (*brand_attachment*) when all predictors (*attitude, loyalty, and satisfaction*) are zero. The constant term is statistically significant with a t-value of 4.069 ($p < 0.001$).

Attitude:

The coefficient for attitude is 0.047, suggesting that a one-unit increase in attitude is associated with a 0.047 increase in the dependent variable (brand_attachment). However, the coefficient for attitude is not statistically significant with a t-value of 0.700 ($p = 0.485$).

Loyalty:

The coefficient for loyalty is -0.145, indicating that a one-unit increase in loyalty is associated with a -0.145 decrease in the dependent variable (brand_attachment). However, the coefficient for loyalty is not statistically significant with a t-value of -0.305 ($p = 0.761$).

Satisfaction:

The coefficient for satisfaction is 0.753, suggesting that a one-unit increase in satisfaction is associated with a 0.753 increase in the dependent variable (brand_attachment). However, the coefficient for satisfaction is not statistically significant with a t-value of 1.603 ($p = 0.112$).

In summary, the analysis of the coefficients indicates that the constant term is statistically significant, suggesting its importance in predicting the dependent variable. However, the coefficients for attitude, loyalty, and satisfaction are not statistically significant, indicating that their individual effects on the dependent variable are not supported by the data. This means that, based on the given analysis, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that attitude, loyalty, and satisfaction have a significant impact on brand_attachment.

It is important to note that this analysis is based solely on the provided coefficients and their associated statistical significance. Other factors, such as sample size, data quality, and the specific context of the study, should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Further analysis or additional data may be needed to draw more definitive conclusions about the relationships between the predictors and the dependent variable.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	100	1,00	2,00	1,4300	,49757
Q1a	100	1,00	5,00	2,4500	1,22578
Q1a	100	1,00	5,00	2,5500	1,16667
Q2a	100	1,00	5,00	2,6500	1,25831
Q1L	100	1,00	5,00	2,5100	1,21018
Q2L	100	1,00	5,00	2,5400	1,12295
Q3L	100	1,00	5,00	2,5500	1,24215
Q1S	100	1,00	5,00	2,5100	1,21018
Q2S	100	1,00	5,00	2,5400	1,12295
Q3S	100	1,00	5,00	2,5000	1,25126
Q1B	100	1,00	5,00	2,1600	1,00222
Q2B	100	1,00	5,00	2,2900	1,02784
Q3B	100	1,00	5,00	2,3800	1,12618
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Each question had a sample size of 100 participants, indicating that all respondents provided answers for these questions.

The response options ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest response option and 5 representing the highest response option. The mean and standard deviation values provide insights into the average responses and the level of agreement or disagreement among the participants for each question.

Here is the detailed analysis for each question:

- **Q1a:** The mean of 2.45 suggests a moderate response, with a standard deviation of 1.22578 indicating considerable variability in responses.
- **Q1b:** The mean of 2.55 suggests a slightly higher response compared to Q1a, with a standard deviation of 1.16667 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q2a:** The mean of 2.65 indicates a slightly higher response compared to both Q1a and Q1b, with a standard deviation of 1.25831 suggesting moderate variability in responses.
- **Q1L:** The mean of 2.51 suggests a moderate response, with a standard deviation of 1.21018 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q2L:** The mean of 2.54 suggests a slightly higher response compared to Q1L, with a standard deviation of 1.12295 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q3L:** The mean of 2.55 suggests a similar response level to Q2L, with a standard deviation of 1.24215 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q1S:** The mean of 2.51 suggests a moderate response, with a standard deviation of 1.21018 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q2S:** The mean of 2.54 suggests a slightly higher response compared to Q1S, with a standard deviation of 1.12295 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q3S:** The mean of 2.50 suggests a similar response level to both Q1S and Q2S, with a standard deviation of 1.25126 indicating moderate variability in responses.
- **Q1B:** The mean of 2.16 suggests a relatively lower response compared to previous questions, with a standard deviation of 1.00222 indicating relatively low variability in responses.
- **Q2B:** The mean of 2.29 suggests a slightly higher response compared to Q1B, with a standard deviation of 1.02784 indicating relatively low variability in responses.
- **Q3B:** The mean of 2.38 suggests a similar response level to Q2B, with a standard deviation of 1.12618 indicating moderate variability in responses.

VI. Discussion

The results of this study provide important insights into the relationship between customer satisfaction, attitude, loyalty, and brand attachment. The regression model showed a statistically significant overall effect ($F = 51.993$, $p < 0.001$), explaining approximately 61.9% of the variance in brand attachment ($R^2 = 0.619$). This indicates that satisfaction, attitude, and loyalty together contribute meaningfully to predicting brand attachment.

However, contrary to expectations, none of the individual predictors—satisfaction ($\beta = 0.753$, $p = 0.112$), attitude ($\beta = 0.047$, $p = 0.485$), and loyalty ($\beta = -0.145$, $p = 0.761$)—were statistically significant. This suggests that while these factors jointly influence brand attachment, their unique individual impacts are not strong enough to be significant in this sample.

One possible explanation is that these predictors may have overlapping effects or are influenced by unmeasured variables. For example, the significant constant term (0.627 , $p < 0.001$) implies that there is a baseline level of brand attachment not explained by satisfaction, attitude, or loyalty. This aligns with existing literature (Albert et al., 2013; Park et al., 2010) which highlights the importance of emotional attachment, trust, shared values, and brand identity as deeper drivers of consumer-brand relationships.

Additionally, moderate variability in responses (standard deviations around 1.1–1.2) and relatively low mean scores (around 2.5 on a 5-point scale) suggest that participants' feelings towards their favorite brands might be lukewarm or ambivalent, possibly affecting the strength of observed relationships.

Proportion of students (58%) in the sample, who might have less stable or less intense brand loyalties, could also explain weaker effects.

These findings support the idea that brand attachment is a complex, multifaceted construct influenced by emotional and symbolic factors beyond simple satisfaction or loyalty metrics. Practically, companies should not only focus on customer satisfaction and loyalty programs but also strive to build strong emotional connections, brand identities, and meaningful consumer-brand interactions.

VII. Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of customer satisfaction, attitude, and loyalty on brand attachment. The overall regression model was found to be statistically significant, explaining approximately 61.9% of the variance in brand attachment. This suggests that, as a group, these predictors have a meaningful relationship with how consumers develop attachments to brands.

However, contrary to initial expectations, none of the individual predictors—satisfaction, attitude, and loyalty—were statistically significant on their own. This finding implies that the effects of these variables on brand attachment may be more complex than a simple linear relationship, potentially involving interactions or the influence of other unmeasured factors.

The significant constant term in the regression model points to a baseline level of brand attachment that exists independently of the measured variables. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of emotional and symbolic aspects of brand relationships that extend beyond rational satisfaction or loyalty measures.

From a practical standpoint, this study highlights that companies aiming to strengthen brand attachment should not only focus on improving satisfaction and loyalty but also consider deeper emotional connections and brand identity-building strategies. Marketers should explore approaches that resonate with consumers' values, social identities, and emotional experiences related to the brand.

Despite its contributions, this research is subject to limitations including a non-probability sample, modest sample size, and limited scope of predictors. Therefore, results should be interpreted with caution.

In summary, this study advances our understanding of the multifaceted nature of brand attachment and provides a foundation for future research to explore additional psychological and contextual variables influencing it.

VIII. Appendix – Survey Questions

Link for direct questionnaire

a) Demographic questions – (Lou and Yuan, 2019)

1. In which age group do you belong?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. What is your current employment status?
5. Write down the name of your favorite brand or the brand you are constantly using.

b) Brand attitude – (Martin Fishbein, 2019)

1. Please rate your overall attitude towards the brand.
2. How much do you agree with the statement: *"I feel a strong emotional connection with this brand."*
3. To what extent do you feel attached to this brand?

c) Brand loyalty – (Jacoby and Chestnut, 2021)

1. How likely are you to continue purchasing products/services from this brand in the future?
2. To what extent do you feel emotionally attached to this brand?

3. Please rate your level of loyalty towards this brand.

d) Customer satisfaction – (Oliver, Richard, 2014)

1. How satisfied are you with your overall experience with this brand?
2. How strongly do you agree with the statement: *"My positive experiences with this brand have made me emotionally attached to it."*
3. To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to this brand based on your satisfaction with their products/services?

e) Brand attachment – (Park, C. Whan; MacInnis, Deborah J., 2010)

1. To what extent do you consider yourself loyal to this brand?
2. How strong is your sense of attachment to this brand?
3. How dedicated are you to maintaining a long-term relationship with this brand?

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